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**APPEALS BOARD  
UTAH LABOR COMMISSION**

**MAHDI ALI JAFF,**

**Petitioner,**

**vs.**

**WILEY HONDA and EMPLOYERS  
COMPENSATION INSURANCE  
COMPANY,**

**Respondents.**

**ORDER SETTING ASIDE  
ALJ'S DECISION**

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**ORDER OF REMAND**

**Case No. 06-0272**

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Wiley Honda and its insurance carrier, Employers Compensation Insurance Company (referred to jointly as "Wiley" hereafter) ask the Appeals Board of the Utah Labor Commission to review Administrative Law Judge Trayner's award of benefits to Mahdi Ali Jaff under the Utah Workers' Compensation Act ("the Act"; Title 34A, Chapter 2, Utah Code Annotated).

The Appeals Board exercises jurisdiction over this motion for review pursuant to Utah Code Annotated §63-46b-12 and §34A-2-801(3).

**BACKGROUND AND ISSUE PRESENTED**

Mr. Ali Jaff claims workers' compensation benefits for back injuries allegedly suffered while working for Wiley on April 16, 2005. Judge Trayner held an evidentiary hearing on Mr. Ali Jaff's claim on August 28, 2006, and then issued her decision on September 25, 2006, awarding temporary disability compensation and medical benefits to Mr. Ali Jaff. Wiley then filed its motion for review of Judge Trayner's decision.

In its motion for review, Wiley challenges Judge Trayner's decision on several points, which can be summarized as follows:

- Failure to select and apply the proper standard for "legal causation";
- Error in concluding that Mr. Ali Jaff's work at Wiley medically caused his back problems;
- Error in determining that Mr. Ali Jaff had not reached medical stability;
- Failure to reduce Mr. Ali Jaff's temporary disability compensation for periods when appropriate light duty work was available;
- Failure to refer the medical aspects of Mr. Ali Jaff's claim to a medical panel.

**DISCUSSION**

In attempting to evaluate Wiley's foregoing arguments, the Appeals Board finds it difficult to understand the factual and legal basis of Judge Trayner's decision. In essence, the decision recites

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a number of subsidiary facts, followed by abstract statements of legal principles. The decision then states certain conclusions, but fails to include any substantial explanation of the ALJ's thought processes in applying the facts to the law to reach such conclusions.

Section 63-46b-10(1) of the Utah Administrative Procedures Act requires ALJs' decisions to include findings of fact, conclusions of law, and "a statement of the reasons for the [ALJ's] decision." If these elements are not expressed with clarity in a decision, the parties cannot understand how the decision was reached, nor can the Appeals Board efficiently review such decision.

In light of the foregoing considerations and concerns, the Appeals Board sets aside Judge Trayner's decision dated September 25, 2006, and remands this matter to Judge Trayner to conduct such additional adjudicatory proceedings as she considers necessary and then issue a new decision that plainly states her findings of fact, conclusions of law, and reasoning.

**ORDER**

The Appeals Board remands this matter to Judge Trayner for further proceedings consistent with this decision. It is so ordered.

Dated this 14<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2006.

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Colleen S. Colton, Chair

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Patricia S. Drawe

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Joseph E. Hatch